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New York

President:	Miss Durrant	(Jamaica)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cappagli
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Malaysia	Mr. Kamal
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchynski
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/455)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

00-51665 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 6.15 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of July, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council during the month of June. I am sure that I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Levitte for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business during June 2000.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/455)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Sierra Leone, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, document S/2000/455.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2000/635 , which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2000/641, letter dated 29 June 2000, from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone): My delegation is delighted to see a representative of our sister Commonwealth nation of Jamaica, which has strong historical and cultural links with Sierra Leone, in the presidential Chair of this body. I would like to join others in extending our warmest congratulations to you, Madam President, and to assure you of our cooperation during your term of office.

I would also like to take this opportunity, Madam President, to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Levitte of France, for successfully directing the affairs of the Council during the busy month of June.

Let me also commend other members of the Council for their patience and cooperation in bringing this phase of the Council's preoccupation with the situation in Sierra Leone to a successful end.

In adopting this draft resolution today, the Security Council will, for the first time, go to the root of the conflict in Sierra Leone. We have always maintained that the conflict in Sierra Leone is not about ideology or tribal or regional differences. It has nothing to do with the so-called problem of marginalized youths. Nor is it, as some political commentators have characterized it, an uprising by the rural poor against the urban elite. The root of the conflict is, and remains, diamonds, diamonds, diamonds.

All along, we have been telling the international community that ours is not a civil war, but a rebel war based on brutality, supported by regional, subregional and international surrogates and, more importantly, financed by illicit trade in Sierra Leone's diamonds. At last, the Security Council has come to realize that the war in Sierra Leone is cast in gemstones.

The Security Council has also come to realize that, in addition to encouraging the Government of Sierra Leone to negotiate peace with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, it could have taken effective action to deal with the role of diamonds in the conflict. Now, it is no longer a secret that the first objective of Mr. Foday Sankoh, the RUF and their supporters at home, in the neighbourhood and abroad, has always been to gain access to the nation's diamonds. Their attempt to seize political power by amputations, rape, arson, killings and other terrorist acts is only a means to achieve the second, principal, objective: the complete control over and occupation of the diamond fields of Sierra Leone.

Now the Security Council and the international community know why the rebels reneged on the Lomé Agreement, which they signed one year ago the day after tomorrow — on 7 July 1999, to be precise — and why they continue to illegally occupy the diamond areas of the country in violation of that Agreement.

Last year, my delegation told the Security Council that we supported the idea of naming names in connection with the illegal trade in what have been described as "conflict diamonds". We had already seen the political and moral impact that naming names has had on the situation concerning Angola; we wanted the same for Sierra Leone. At this point in time, naming names should be seen as an expression of serious concern about the role played by the illicit trade in our diamonds in fuelling the conflict. It is a peaceful means of applying political and moral pressure on the principal transit route of such trade to help facilitate an early and peaceful end to the conflict. It is also a reminder that an early end to the conflict is in the interests not only of Sierra Leone but also of all the citizens of the entire West African subregion.

We make no apology for requesting that the Security Council name names. We did so in the name and on behalf of the victims of rebel atrocities, particularly the children whose hands and arms have been deliberately amputated — children whose future has been virtually destroyed by the illicit trade in diamonds. Let me add that those who hold the view that naming names could hurt the feelings of States should also think about the feelings — the physical and emotional pain — of the unfortunate and innocent victims of this conflict over diamonds. We maintain that the illicit export of Sierra Leonean diamonds not only is the root and fuel of the conflict, but also constitutes a major obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

My delegation is grateful to the Security Council for the decision it is about to take. Although we wish it had come earlier, we regard it as a major contribution to the search for peace and stability in Sierra Leone. We have already seen some positive signs of the impact that this resolution could have on the trade in Sierra Leonean diamonds; we are encouraged by this emerging trend. Of course, much will depend on the political will and cooperation of Member States and the international diamond industry to ensure full implementation of the resolution.

The President: I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for the kind words he addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): My delegation warmly welcomes you to the chair, Madam President, in this your first meeting presiding over the Council. We will work very closely with you during the month of July. You follow the notably effective presidency of France, under the extremely competent leadership of Ambassador Levitte, to whom we are also very grateful, in particular for helping us to take forward the work on this draft resolution.

Diamonds are at the heart of the tragedy of Sierra Leone. A precious resource, which should be a source of wealth for national development, has become a cause of human suffering on a terrible scale, and the Ambassador of Sierra Leone has very eloquently pointed that out. The draft resolution we are voting on is a robust and imaginative response by the Security Council to that tragedy. The Council has shown itself ready to take a strong lead in addressing this problem and to have learned lessons from previous experience, especially Ambassador Fowler's excellent work on Angola.

Building partly on his experience, this draft resolution will send a powerful signal about the need to

end the trade in conflict diamonds from Sierra Leone. It includes a number of practical and, indeed, ground-breaking measures to achieve that aim. One of those is the exploratory hearing of the sanctions Committee, which we hope will be held within the next month. This offers a real opportunity to shine a powerful light on an illicit trade which prefers to operate in the shadows. The United Kingdom is ready to offer all possible assistance to Ambassador Chowdhury, as Chairman of the sanctions Committee, in order to make this hearing a success.

The draft resolution will also provide for a panel of experts to look at violations of the arms embargo and the link between diamonds and arms — a very important step and a clear signal that the international community will no longer tolerate sanctions-busting, particularly in circumstances like these.

The role of the international diamond industry will also be crucial. The draft resolution is unusual in its direct appeal to the diamond trade. Many in the industry have already shown great responsibility in responding to the problem of conflict diamonds, including from Sierra Leone. We look to all parts of the industry to do likewise and to fully commit themselves to ending this cynical commerce.

The role of Sierra Leone's neighbours is equally critical. Action elsewhere will be meaningless if illicit Sierra Leone diamonds still flood out of the country, over its borders. This resolution makes clear where the Council's concerns lie. The widely held view that the bulk of Sierra Leone diamonds at present flow out of the country via the RUF through Liberia is well founded. This resolution will now impose international obligations on all Governments to put a stop to this illicit trade. So we now look to the Governments in the region most closely involved to share a strong commitment to peace in Sierra Leone and to act now to cut off this trade. Their long-term interests will undoubtedly be served, in terms of the region's security and its future prosperity, if they take this approach.

We are taking these steps and considering other important measures to follow in the search for peace and a normal life for the people of Sierra Leone. The aim of this draft resolution is to ensure eventually and at long last that diamonds bring benefit and not misery to that long-suffering population, and in particular, that diamonds are not used to pay for arms to undermine the legitimate authority and attack either innocent civilians or United Nations peacekeeping forces.

This is a creditable move by the Council upon which we must build further.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to me.

Ms. Soderberg (United States): Thank you very much, Madam President. It is a special pleasure to say "Madam President", which does not happen very often. Thank you very much for today's meeting.

Sierra Leone has weighed heavily on the world's conscience for the past two years. We have all watched in horror as the civilian population endured unimaginable suffering and hardship. The brutal tactics of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of indiscriminately cutting off the limbs of hundreds of men, women and children have shocked us all. We have a responsibility to help the people of Sierra Leone return to the quiet, peaceful and productive lives they all deserve.

Today the Council takes an important step forward toward that goal. In banning the sale of illicit diamonds, we take a strong stand against war and for peace. Diamonds and their illicit procurement and sale by the RUF rebels fuel the conflict in Sierra Leone. The rebels have used the sale of diamonds to fund their operations and to procure weapons, as well as to enrich their leaders.

I commend the leadership of Sir Jeremy Greenstock and the United Kingdom in putting forward this draft resolution. The United States, Canada and others have also been in the forefront of the efforts to find ways to prevent the illicit transfer of diamonds from fuelling conflicts, particularly in Africa.

The illicit trade in diamonds is closely linked to illicit trade in small arms. We remind all States of existing sanctions on arm shipments to the RUF. We believe the resolution is a necessary and critical step to assist the Government of Sierra Leone in re-establishing authority over its diamond-producing regions. Efforts are already under way to help the Government of Sierra Leone establish a certification system. We are working in cooperation with the United Kingdom and others to support this endeavour.

We will vote to adopt this resolution, but we do so with reservations on the time-frame. We are

concerned about the negative implications of putting in place time-limited sanctions. Sanctions are difficult for Member States to impose within their own national legal systems. They become more difficult to implement if turned off and on.

We believe the diamond boycott should stay in place until the control of the Government of Sierra Leone over the diamond regions has been fully established. We favour the establishment of benchmark criteria to be met before sanctions can be lifted. This draft resolution links the removal of sanctions to the arbitrary passage of time, rather than to fair and reasonable compliance with requirements established by the Council. We do not agree with time limits, but we have accepted the consensus view of other Council members on this issue, given the critical importance of imposing sanctions to end the illicit trade in diamonds for arms carried on by the RUF.

The United States strongly believes its sanctions, to have meaning and force, must be tied to a change in the behaviour that prompts imposition of the sanctions in the first place, not to an arbitrary date on the calendar. In this case the change in behaviour is the end of the RUF's use of diamonds to fuel its war machine and human rights abuses, and the full control of the Government over its resources. The use of time limits in this resolution or in any others undermines the incentive for sanctioned States or entities to comply with the demands of the Security Council, unhelpfully encouraging them to believe that if they can simply outlast the patience of the Council or somehow divide its members, sanctions will be lifted without compliance or will simply expire.

It is up to the Council to review, consider and modify its own sanctions. This resolution calls for an 18-month period of sanctions. Eighteen months is an arbitrary political compromise; it has no basis in fact or anything related to the situation on the ground in Sierra Leone. In the end, time limits provide comfort only to those under sanctions and to those who, contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, believe that sanctions are not an appropriate tool of Security Council policy.

We should target sanctions to protect civilian populations, but not to give rogues and criminals time off for bad behaviour when sanctions run out. By placing time limits on Sierra Leone's sanctions we are undermining the effectiveness of this important resolution and damaging the Council's ability to impose credible sanctions in the future.

The only permissible criteria for ending sanctions must be compliance with Security Council resolutions. Otherwise, the security of the Council is undermined. If there had been time limits on the Libyan sanctions, for instance, the suspects would never have been handed over to the Scottish court in the Netherlands.

Finally, let me underscore the importance of the step the Council takes today. It places the Security Council firmly on the side of peace in Sierra Leone. We will vote for this resolution, and we urge those who continue to thwart peace in Sierra Leone to take due notice.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for her kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): The Security Council is to going to take a decision on a matter of particular importance to Mali. As is known, Mali is presiding over the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Today's vote comes after the important meeting of the Security Council with the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council Committee on Sierra Leone, held in this same chamber on 21 June.

The Security Council is going to take an important decision on Sierra Leone following liberation, thanks to the efforts of ECOWAS, one of whose member States is called into question in the draft resolution before us. How can we not also think now of the many — and I am thinking of the 222 soldiers and 11 military observers — still surrounded? The Security Council will decide today about Sierra Leone, even while a joint high-level meeting between ECOWAS and the United Nations Secretariat is scheduled at Lomé on 10 July, in a few days, to be followed by an operational meeting, both focusing on the situation in Sierra Leone.

Mali has often recalled that the main concern of ECOWAS is the revival of the peace process in Sierra Leone. In this context, the Security Council meeting with the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council Committee on 21 June provided a useful opportunity to hold a candid and constructive dialogue, during which the ECOWAS eight-point action plan for Sierra Leone was abundantly explained. This plan has been circulated to all the members of the Council and to all

members of the United Nations as well. It contains a number of points covered in the draft resolution, in particular the matter of diamonds. The declaration made by the Security Council and ECOWAS after the meeting very aptly underscored that the meeting had been held in a spirit of genuine partnership, which the participants decided to pursue and strengthen in the future.

The draft resolution we have before us, however, does not seem to be part of this dynamic, since it does not sufficiently take into consideration the concerns expressed by my delegation. The draft openly accuses a member of ECOWAS, the President of which played a constructive role, with other ECOWAS leaders, in the peace process in Sierra Leone. We are concerned about the repercussions on the peace process of the finger-pointing at Liberia.

This reference is unacceptable to ECOWAS. We feel it is not timely while the ECOWAS enquiry into the diamond trade is not yet completed. This is why my delegation will not be able to support the text as now before us.

Starting right now, we must think about the future — in other words, what comes after the resolution. In particular, we must think about the way in which we can protect President Taylor's constructive commitment with regard to the peace process. We must also reflect on the way in which we might help ECOWAS to play a more effective role in the solution to the crisis in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: Russia attaches great importance to the draft resolution that we are about to adopt today. It is likely to become an important element in international efforts to settle the conflict in Sierra Leone. This document puts barriers in the way of the criminal diamond trade of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which is fuelling a continuation of the conflict. The resolution sends a clear and unambiguous signal to the participants in this business from other countries on the unacceptability of the situation that has arisen for the international community.

We believe it is extremely important that the measures provided for in the draft resolution in this area should not be detrimental to the interests of legitimate participants in the international diamond market. The resolution also provides for tightening control over the observation of the embargo on military supplies to Sierra Leone imposed earlier. We hope that the tightening of this control will play an important role in stabilizing the situation in that country.

It is of fundamental importance that the duration of the sanctions regime, in relation to the illegitimate export of diamonds from Sierra Leone, is limited to 18 months from the time of adoption of the draft resolution. After that time, the Council will once again review the situation in Sierra Leone and, if necessary, will take decisions as to whether the sanctions should be extended, whether they should be adjusted or whether supplementary measures should be taken. In this way, with the adoption of this resolution, a further step will be taken towards making the mechanism of the imposition of sanctions more effective and equitable, including a further confirmation in practice of the principle of time limitations on the imposition of sanctions.

On this basis, Russia will vote for this draft resolution.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) *(spoke in Spanish)*: At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency, and I would like to wish you the greatest success. You can count on our full cooperation. I would also like to express our gratitude and extend our warm regards to Ambassador Levitte and his entire team for the excellent manner in which they conducted our work last month. Also, I would like to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for having introduced this draft resolution and for the leadership displayed in the efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Sierra Leone.

Argentina fully supports this draft resolution. It is not designed to punish the Government of Sierra Leone. On the contrary, it is directed against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and is a clear-cut measure to safeguard the legitimate interests of the people of Sierra Leone. Setting up a fully operational certificate of origin régime for Sierra Leone diamonds is consonant with this purpose and with the ultimate objective of bringing about a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Sierra Leone.

Therefore, Argentina trusts that this draft resolution will help to achieve a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, it will protect the legitimate resources of the people of Sierra Leone; on the other, it will prevent a situation in which resources generated by illegal

traffic in Sierra Leone diamonds continues to fuel the armed conflict in that country.

We appeal for the contents of this resolution to be fully implemented, as well as paragraph 2 of resolution 1132 (1997) on the arms embargo and travel restrictions. It is only through concerted efforts within the international community, including the neighbouring countries in particular, that it will be possible to break the illegal traffic in arms and diamonds — the damaging impact of which is familiar to all of us — throughout the region.

We appeal to the Government of Sierra Leone to set up as soon as possible a certificate of origin régime for Sierra Leone diamonds that will be fully operational and effective. We are convinced that countries with long experience in this field will provide the necessary assistance to this end.

Argentina supports the principle of clear limitations on sanctions régimes and the need for periodic review of sanctions régimes. This is why we are particularly satisfied to see both principles enshrined in this text. However, in this particular case, where the prescriptive measures were expressly requested by the Government of Sierra Leone and target a rebel movement notorious for its unusual cruelty against the civilian population, we would have preferred the initial period to be rather longer, since this, in our opinion, would have made the regime more functional and effective.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation is deeply concerned about the negative role played by the illicit diamond trade in the civil war in Sierra Leone.

We believe that the international community must take strong measures to stop the illicit exploitation of and trade in diamonds, to put an end to the rebellion of the Revolutionary United Front and to protect the legitimate Government elected by the people of that country. Only in this way will we find a lasting solution to the problems of Sierra Leone, which is the unshirkable responsibility of the Security Council.

We believe that the draft resolution to be adopted by the Security Council will constitute a very important step in that direction. We note that, in its letter addressed to the Council, the Government of Sierra Leone indicates its acceptance of the sanctions imposed on it. We hope that, through this measure, the international community can help to restore peace in Sierra Leone as soon as possible.

At the same time, my delegation believes that any sanctions imposed by the Council should not be indefinite. A periodic review of such measures should be conducted and adjustments made as the situation warrants. We are satisfied with the element of time-bound sanctions contained in the text of the draft resolution.

The President: I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2000/635.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, China, France, Jamaica, Malaysia, Namibia, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Mali

The President: The result of the voting is as follows: 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 1306 (2000).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We should like to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom, and Ambassador Greenstock in particular, for their tireless work in preparing the resolution we have just adopted. It is a constructive expression of the Security Council's dedication to peace and stability in Sierra Leone. We believe that the measures imposed by the resolution will make it possible to shed light on and discourage the trade in illicitly mined diamonds in that country, which is one of the basic causes of the war there.

As we have mentioned in the past, the natural wealth of Sierra Leone must be used for the benefit of the entire population, as prescribed by the Lomé Peace

Agreement, if we are to put an end to the horrendous conflict in that country. Recent violations of the Lomé Agreement have compelled the Council clearly to declare its position on that principle.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada believes that curbing the trade in rebel diamonds from Sierra Leone requires concerted action at the source, within the region and within the market. We welcome the balanced approach of this resolution, which targets illicit Sierra Leone diamonds through a certification regime, while also recalling the responsibility of the diamond industry to be vigilant in its processes and in its practices.

We look forward to the conclusions of the exploratory hearing and to the findings of the panel of experts created by this resolution, which we hope will shed light on the link between the trade in diamonds and the supply of arms to rebel groups in Sierra Leone.

Our principal concern must be to ensure that these positive measures are not undermined from the outset. In this regard, Canada believes that the Council may need to take further action to tackle the regional sources of support for the abhorrent actions of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the group most clearly responsible for Sierra Leone's suffering in recent years. The complicity of certain West African States in exporting illicit diamonds from Sierra Leone and in supplying the RUF with arms, in violation of Council measures, must be faced squarely. The role of Liberia merits particular attention in this regard, but it is not alone and our actions in addressing Liberia's conduct candidly and resolutely, as the European Union has done through its suspension of assistance to Liberia, will determine whether other parties in the region are deterred or emboldened.

When the panel of experts created in this resolution reports its findings, the Council will need to examine carefully whether States, such as Liberia, have ceased their involvement in the illicit diamond trade and whether additional measures might be required to enforce the embargo on arms transfers to the RUF.

The Council has signalled its sustained engagement in this process by expressing its willingness to consider a range of options to ensure compliance with this resolution, including involving the Liberia and Angola sanctions Committees in enforcement efforts. Canada will support these efforts and will press for candour at every turn. We must undertake, as Ambassador Kamara has just said so forcefully, to name and shame those who sustain this war, which, over the past eight years, has violated every standard of humanity.

The United Nations credibility with regard to Sierra Leone is at stake in this resolution. Certain States may well choose to test the resolve of the Council with respect to this resolution. As a country that has worked to ensure that practical, effective and credible action on sanctions becomes part of our collective ethic, Canada believes that the Council must be prepared to build steadfastly on today's undertakings and to take clear-eyed further steps if our efforts at gaining full compliance are to be sustained and are to be effective.

This resolution is an important step in the right direction and will provide a solid basis for further action in addressing the roots of the shameful conflict in Sierra Leone and in bringing the suffering of its people to an end.

Mr. Van Walsum (Netherlands): It is no secret that the Security Council has had to spend considerable time in informal consultations before this resolution could be adopted. It would, however, be unfortunate if this should give rise to the assumption, in West Africa or anywhere else, that there was disagreement within the Council on the fundamental objective of this resolution. When the Council is seen to need a great deal of time to come to an agreement, it is normally caused by divergence of views as to who is to blame in a given conflict. This is not what has caused the delay in this case.

The two issues which first needed to be resolved were of a totally different nature. The first problem concerned the initial duration and subsequent extension of the measures. Our debate on this matter reflected the general unease about the phenomenon of sanctions that last much longer than originally intended and then stay in place only because there is no effective majority in favour of their abolition. My delegation appreciates this unease and is strongly in favour of periodic review, but we continue to be opposed to time limits that lead to an automatic discontinuation of sanctions in the absence of a resolution leading to their extension.

The second problem concerned the traditional reluctance prevalent in certain quarters, if not in certain continents, to call a spade a spade. This is not really a

disagreement; it is a cultural difference that international society has to live with.

The debate on these two issues should not be allowed to offer any relief to those who exploit the diamond trade to fuel the conflict in Sierra Leone. My delegation welcomes the resolve of the Security Council to deprive the Revolutionary United Front of its means to wage a cruel war against the people of Sierra Leone.

The President: The Security Council has completed its voting procedure.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for your very generous words addressed to me. I would like to express the warmest and most confident wishes for the complete success of our work under your elegant and able guidance.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia — as well as Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, which are also associated countries, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to express the European Union's support for the resolution on the situation in Sierra Leone that was skilfully and determinedly prepared by the United Kingdom, and for the strengthening of existing sanctions and the establishment of an embargo on rough diamonds illicitly exported from Sierra Leone. The adoption of this resolution is a first step, and shows that the international community intends to react in the firmest possible way to the events that have taken place in Sierra Leone since the beginning of May.

The European Union also hopes that the Security Council will, on the one hand, be able to decide swiftly and positively on increasing the staff of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) as proposed in the Secretary-General's last report and, on the other hand, examine the assistance that might be given to the Government of Sierra Leone to bring to trial Mr. Foday Sankoh and other persons responsible for violations of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

The European Union vigorously condemns the actions of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), in particular the attacks and hostile actions committed against UNAMSIL. It calls upon the RUF immediately and unconditionally to respect the commitments it has made and to begin the process of demobilization and disarmament provided for under the Lomé Agreement. The European Union underscores the personal responsibility of Mr. Foday Sankoh in the course of recent events, by virtue of which he can no longer be considered one of the partners in the peace process under any circumstances.

The European Union considers the measures proposed in the resolution as being particularly timely for various reasons.

First, the measures aim to put an end to the illicit exploitation of diamonds in Sierra Leone by the Revolutionary United Front, an exploitation that is substantially contributing to financing that movement's war effort and impoverishing the people of Sierra Leone as a whole. The European Union is convinced that the establishment of a lasting peace in Sierra Leone requires drying up the RUF's financial resources.

Secondly, these measures have been the subject of close consultation with the Government of Sierra Leone. They show a concern for cooperation with those economically involved in the diamond trade. The setting up of an effective system of certificates of origin for diamonds produced in Sierra Leone may ultimately complete the efforts already undertaken by the Security Council in other African countries, in particular in Angola. This will give complete legality to the diamond trade and should contribute to peace and development in Africa and other regions of the world.

Thirdly and lastly, these measures will strengthen the existing embargo on arms. On several occasions, the European Union has had opportunity to express its concern over violations of Security Council resolution 1171 (1998). The Secretary-General's proposal to set up a group of experts responsible for collecting information on violations of that embargo and examining the links between the diamond trade and the arms trade meets with the particular support of the European Union. The European Union calls on all countries concerned, and primarily on the countries neighbouring Sierra Leone, to show exemplary cooperation with that group of experts.

The European Union is pleased to welcome all measures taken to strengthen the role of the sanctions

Committee set up under resolution 1132 (1998). The holding of a preliminary hearing by the sanctions Committee between now and the end of the month to assess the role of diamonds in the conflict in Sierra Leone, and the links between the trade in Sierra Leone diamonds and the arms trade, represents an important decision. We hope that the holding of such a hearing involving both governmental and non-governmental experts may serve as a precedent for the work of other committees.

The European Union also notes that the resolution establishes an embargo regime on diamonds for an initial period of 18 months and provides for bi-annual reviews of the implementation of the embargo. The European Union takes note of the commitment made by the Security Council to carry out an in-depth review of the situation at the end of the 18-month period so as to take a fresh decision, if necessary, to either extend the measures taken and adjust them if need be, or to adopt new measures in the light of the Government's authority over diamond-producing areas. The European Union believes that all these measures are aimed at supporting the efforts of the authorities in Sierra Leone in order to enable them to take back the control over resources that have slipped through their fingers. They also reflect the concern of the Security Council to ensure that the measures it adopts are effectively followed up with actions.

Finally, the European Union is satisfied with the close coordination between the Security Council and the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with regard to the situation in Sierra Leone. As Ambassador Moctar Ouane emphasized, the meeting held last month between the Security Council and the ministerial delegation of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council Committee of Six on Sierra Leone is evidence of this indispensable closeness.

The European Union would like to recall that the restoration of peace in Sierra Leone will be possible only with the active support of the countries of the region. Conversely, the persistence of chronic insecurity in Sierra Leone would be a handicap to subregional development and would fuel the destabilization of neighbouring countries.

The President: I thank Ambassador Levitte for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.